

aftertaste

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aftertaste by lizwillstealyourgirl

Category: IT (2017), IT - Stephen King

Genre: Canonical Character Death, F/M, Fluff, Heaven, I Wrote This Instead of Sleeping, M/M, Sort of? - Freeform, gay lol, georgie isn't alive but he's not like. gone, im not really sure what year this is based in, its bittersweet, its happy ish, its kind of soft, short but sweet, stanlon is the only Good Thing in this world

Language: English

Characters: Ben Hanscom, Beverly Marsh, Bill Denbrough, Eddie Kaspbrak, Georgie Denbrough, Mike Hanlon, Richie Tozier, Stanley Uris

Relationships: Ben Hanscom/Beverly Marsh, Eddie Kaspbrak/Richie Tozier, Mike Hanlon/Stamley Uris

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Summary:

stan was alone. he was tired, and sad, and alone in some dark, empty room and honestly he thought he was there for centuries. until he wasn't.

—after the loser's die, they make their way to heaven. it's the aftertaste of derry, of what once was.

aftertaste

Author's Note:

this is bad sorry i guess lol. it's not really sad but it kind of is i guess?????? it's sad yeah

WARNING i do use the term queer in a non derogatory, lowkey offensive way? like stan says i didn't know he was a queer, and he's not saying it in a bad way he's just like. saying it.

i have no idea what the timeline for this is and idk how the characters died except eddie and stan bc i didn't read the book so this is loosely based off of the book and the movie and just like. my brain ig????

also i shouldn't have tagged any ships honestly bc they're all mostly just implied (mike and stan never get together smh!!!!!! but like they do ? idk. it's heaven fuck if i know how anything works)

ALSO. I AM NOT JEWISH IDK ANYTHING ABOUT JUDAISM BUT I HAVE HEARD OF SHEOL SO I LOWKEY RESEARCHED IT AND IT SAID IT WAS A DEBATED AFTERLIFE SO I INCLUDED STAN MENTIONING THAT? if it's offensive please tell me and i will fix it!!!

ANYWAY. pls enjoy.

- aftertaste

stan was alone. he was tired, and sad, and alone in some dark, empty room and honestly he thought he was there for centuries. until he wasn't.

everyday he would open his eyes for a few hours at a time, just to see the sunlight. he never left the room, though there was a door. he never even tried to use the door. in some weird way, he was in denial of the room. he thought maybe one day he would wake up, back in the bathtub that he had laid in before he had stopped breathing. he never did wake up though. sitting in front of the door, he held his breath for as long as he could and counted. it was a routine of his. *breathe, don't breathe - count. breathe, don't breathe - count.* it was the only way he would make it out of the room. unless the room was infinitely his home. then he was screwed.

he practiced his routine like he always did. *breathe, don't breathe - count. breathe, don't breathe - count. breathe, don't breathe - count. breathe, don't breathe - count. breathe -*

a thud. it sounded like a body had dropped from the sky. then some breathing and some groaning. stan stared at the door, barely breathing anymore. and then the door - well, it did something it had never done before. it opened.

and it was eddie kaspbrak.

stan was not prepared to see the boy he'd known from his younger years. eddie was young-looking. stan wondered if he ever really grew up. eddie had a soft face and freckles and one of those stupid fanny packs again. "stanley?" he called out, inhaling in his shaking left hand. "is that you?"

stan scrambled to his feet. "eddie. it's me." it was silent for a moment, just the two standing and staring. then, eddie leaped into stan's arms, both of them succumbing to tears.

“what’s happened? where are you? where are we?” eddie cried out as he clutched onto stan. stan shook his head. he didn’t know. they just stood there and cried for who knows how long. hours fell by them. they just let themselves be sad. stan just needed to be sad.

“have you been here all this time? are we-“ eddie let out a wail. “are we dead, stanley?”

stan didn’t know what to say. he had been in denial, pretending like he had never taken his own life and like he didn’t know how that had ended up. but he did know. *he knew.*

“yeah, we are, eddie.”

they sat together for a little bit, then. neither knew what to say or do. what do you say or do when your dead childhood best friend finds you dead? days seemed to pass. they stared and stared and cried and didn’t say a word. didn’t move a muscle. just sat there and cried. until eddie stood. “stanley, have you ever left this room?” stan shook his head in response. “let’s leave it together.” eddie had only left it once, and that was just when to walk in. he probably hadn’t seen much, stan figured.

they stood in front of the door, stan’s quivering hand on the doorknob. “what’s it like out there?” he asked eddie.

eddie shrugged. “i only saw the door. we’ll find out together.” he clasped a gentle hand onto stan’s shoulder.

“together.” stan nodded. an almost-broken promise weighted themselves between them. *together*.

he creaked open the door. the sunlight was beautiful. the air felt fresh. stan wished he'd opened it the day he arrived at the room. he's also sort of glad he waited for eddie. together. “is that...is that the quarry?” eddie whispered, pointing forward. yes. it was.

directly ahead of them was no hallway. there was no empty home or any other room at all. ahead of them was the barrens. the quarry. and a road that looked amazingly like the one that would lead them back into the town of derry with the library and the school and the shops.

“are we in derry?” stan mumbles back.

“no. we're dead.”

it was quiet as they slowly made their way out of the doorway, towards the quarry.

“is this sheol?” stan wondered aloud.

“that's the afterlife, right?” eddie asked him back. stan nodded. “i think this is something like that.” eddie smiled in a sad sort of way.

they let themselves be quiet for a little bit as they traveled the dirt road that curled into their bones and melted into their blood. they were home, they had to be home. except they weren't. they were *dead*.

they were reluctant of the derry they were in for a while. how could you trust a copy of your hometown that you found after you died? but eventually stan forced himself to take a leap of faith. and he walked down the path he knew so well. he wondered where he'd come across his bike. he couldn't remember where he'd last left it. eddie followed close behind him. he wondered if eddie knew either.

they saw bill's silver. stan remembered in high school when bill broke it beyond saving and felt so guilty that he told his parents it was stolen. he remembered telling him to just tell the truth, but bill explained to him that sometimes nothing was worse than the truth.

after It, they didn't talk enough about things of real meaning. sometimes stan wonders if that was partially his fault. all he could ever manage, when It came up, was an "*i hate you*" and a smile. and neither were true. he didn't hate bill, or any of his friends. he loved them all, but how could he say those words, say he loved them, if all he could ever see was the face of a dancing clown trying to kill them, or the face of a painted lady trying to eat him.

they saw richie's glasses, stomped on and broken. stan remembered when he traded them in for contacts and destroyed them. only a few months later he decided he hated his contacts, but he had already trashed his glasses, so the whole club had to save up to buy him new ones for christmas. it had been a nice day, when richie got those new coke bottle, wind shield glasses. richie had said so many nice things, and only a handful of stupid "your mom" jokes. stan wondered if eddie missed richie. although stan and richie had been best friends,

eddie and richie had a connection stan (nor the others) could ever understand; richie was protective of eddie, and eddie admired richie. stan sometimes wondered if, in another universe, richie and eddie could've been in love.

he doesn't want to answer that question, because it always seems to lead his mind back to mike.

eddie picked up the glasses as they passed by. he just looked at them for a moment, before setting them down again exactly as they were.

they found themselves at the bridge. they remember this bridge. this is where ben was when he needed to be saved. really, they only found him in the sewers, but before they found him he was hurt too. stan liked to think about ben on his bad days. ben was kinder than most. ben was sweet. he didn't need to be, but he was. stan wondered if he was still sweet. he never saw him again after their own loser's club reunion. after they all graduated college, they met again for a few days in derry. all seven, even beverly. they had all swam in the quarry one last time. *one last time*. that was the last time he saw ben. he remembered what ben had said to him.

"i missed you a lot at college, stanley. there was a little bird watching club. i joined it so i could be with you, in a silly little way."

stan had smiled, and told him, *"sometimes i go to poetry nights just so i can remember of all the things you wrote for beverly. we sure grew up fast."*

and they kept walking. they passed the path that would take them to

where the Rock War of 1989 had happened. stan always admired richie after that. mike had needed them, and they didn't fail him. that's something they could all be proud of. stan wondered if eddie remembered the rock war like that too.

"is It dead?" stan asked, the words tumbling past his lips without even knowing it.

"i think so. It killed me but i don't think richie would let It live."

stan nodded. how do you respond to that? "i think in a way It killed me too," was all he said. eddie nodded. It sort of killed them all.

they found themselves in the middle of the town. stan remembered the town with softness. he remembered the movie nights and parades and dances they all went to together. six boys and sometimes beverly, all going as one big party of kids who didn't have anyone else. stan saw eddie smile out of the corner of his eye.

"i miss richie, i think. i remember when he stole the marching band's tuba. was it a tuba?"

"i think it was." stan smiled softly back.

"richie sure knew how to make me smile. he-he..." eddie seemed to leave the words he wanted to say on the tip of his tongue.

stan nodded. it's okay. he knew.

they kept walking. beverly's house. the town was empty but beverly's house felt like a black hole as they passed it. once they knew what her father was like they never went back by there. how could they? bill and ben sometimes cried when they thought about all that beverly went through. stan wondered if she knew how much all the boys cared about her.

then they found themselves at river. that's where the town ended. "should we be all the way out here? maybe we should...maybe we should go to neibolt? maybe that's why we're here, we need closure."

stan nodded, thinking. "i don't think i can go to neibolt yet."

eddie nodded. "i don't think so either. i was always scared i could die but i never really thought it would happen. and then it did."

"and then it did." stan repeated. "let's walk back there anyway. or sort of. i-i kind of want to go to our old houses. i sort of missed derry while i was away."

"yeah. me too." eddie smiled.

so, they turned around and walked back.

this time they took the road past the town house, past mike's parents'

house, past bill's house, all the way up to mike and henry bower's farms. bower's felt like it always did; empty and cold. but mike's felt the same and that was the problem. mike's never felt like that.

stan had spent quite a few nights at that farm. sometimes with the other losers, but sometimes just him and mike. they would do homework or watch the birds or tell each other about how they felt like outsiders from even the outsiders. he and mike had a friendship like none of the other loser's that not even richie and eddie with their intuitive connection could beat.

stan missed mike. sometimes he thought about what he should've done when mike called. sometimes he thinks he shouldn't have been in the bathtub. but he was and he *did*, so that was that.

"what do we do now?" stan asked, staring at the barn that he and mike had spent an amazing amount of time at.

"it's time we accept that we're dead, i guess." eddie scoffed. "i hate that we're dead."

stan nodded in agreement. they sat in silence for just a few minutes again. "when mike called i couldn't handle it. how can someone handle it? all of it came back and...i know it wasn't right and i regret it but i didn't want to come back here. i just couldn't." stan admitted.

eddie nodded. "it's okay. we all forgave you a long time ago. bill said...bill said he thinks he should've known it would've happened. mike said the same. we all forgave you, but i don't know if any of them forgave themselves."

stan smiled. “i forgave you all anyway.”

eddie laughed softly. “when i died richie was holding me. he called me ed’s, and cute, and i,” eddie swallowed and sighed. “i wish i had been braver. i wish i had said what he wanted to hear. what he needed to hear. what i wanted to say. but i didn’t and then i died.” eddie shrugged. “he kissed me before i was dead. he thought i was dead but i wasn’t. i remember hearing beverly crying a-and i wished with all my heart i could be stronger for them, live for them. but i was too far gone.”

“w-what had happened?” stan asked nervously.

eddie chuckled. “well, It ended up being a demon, alien, spider-clown. and a girl, actually.” stan sort of started to laugh too. “yeah. It ripped off my arm in spider form. honestly it would’ve been so cool if it weren’t for the fact that i was dying.”

“a demon, alien, spider-clown.” stan smiled. “our lives are so weird.”

“oh, and i think she was pregnant too. really, it’s just derry that’s weird. i think we’re just unlucky.” the afterlife was weird.

stan was lonely, sort of. even with eddie, he couldn’t help but wonder if the others missed them. he knew they did, realistically. well, he knew they missed eddie; they watched eddie die. they had been reunited with him and then he died. and eddie was always more lovable than stan was. so, really, he just wondered if they missed

stan.

they spent years mindlessly existing in the new derry. they were lonely, and sad, and eventually they were bored. they had each other and they grew as close as they had been in middle school, but they didn't have anyone but each other. that was lonely.

they were back by the quarry one day. they didn't go there often but that day it felt like every bone in their body was saying, go to the barrens! so they did. and they saw bill. bill, just there. confused and scared and crying. he looked young again, like stan and eddie did.

"bill?" eddie called with a gentle gasp. yes, stan almost cheered, yes!

and then he realized why bill was here.

stan began to cry, like he always did. eddie almost cried too.

"why are you crying? why are you here? is this a dream?" bill begged for an answer.

"you don't stutter anymore." stan pointed it out happily, still blubbering like a baby. "you don't stutter!"

"i haven't in a long time. what's happening? why am i here? is this a dream?" bill called out to them again.

eddie cried like stan was, blabbering and wet. "you're dead, bill. we're all dead."

"no." he whispered. "no, i-it can't be."

eddie nodded. "it's okay, bill, you're okay." he hugged him softly. "it's okay." stan wrapped his arms around the both of them.

"it's okay." he whispered too.

"why are we in derry?" bill asked in a wail. "we don't know. this is our afterlife." eddie explained what they knew, which was only that.

"do you want to walk around?" stan asked.

bill shook his head. "i want to go back," bill begged.

"i don't know how to bring you back," stan admitted.

"i'm sorry. we both are." eddie apologized, running his fingers through bill's hair.

"what happened?" stan mumbled. "i-i don't know. an accident. it was

loud. i think i crashed my car. no, a car crashed into me. i don't know." he began to cry again, the boys holding him tight in their arms. "is georgie here?" bill cried out. "do you think he'd be here?"

"maybe." eddie said softly. eddie was always better with sadness. "we can go look for him."

stan thought that there was no way georgie would be there. he was sure of it. but there he was, playing with toys in bill's home. he'd been there for decades. 50 or so years. stan couldn't believe it. how had georgie done it?

georgie said, "i knew bill'd always come back for me." he just knew.

they stayed at the house for a while. stan liked to stay at bill's house because it had always felt like a home before georgie disappeared. once georgie was gone, the losers had to make it a home for bill by spending as much time as possible at his house. they would have weekend sleepovers there, just creating memories. stan loved to remember all of the dumb things they did in their high school years. they would make anything and everything into smoothies, and they would play makeshift/indoors baseball with a rolled up rug for a bat and sheets of paper. they made bill's house a home, because before it, georgie made it a home, and after georgie there was nothing.

georgie didn't grow up like bill and the other losers did. stan grew up sad and eddie grew up sick and bill grew up alone. but georgie didn't grow up at all. sometimes stan wished he'd have died young like george denbrough, before the heartbreak and broken promises that is growing up. other times he's glad he got to be a person. george never got to be himself, not really.

not so many years passed this time before they found ben. again, they all had that feeling - telling them to go back to the quarry. when they did, they all began to cry, just like they always did. it was ben, their sweet little poet, kindhearted and soft. stan had never been happier to see him. they all sat at the quarry, even georgie, soft-spoken in their words. the five of them didn't feel so alone anymore, not like stan used to. and then came beverly, and when beverly came, ben almost died again. seeing each other young again broke their hearts in every good way. stan didn't know they fell in love. it happened after he died.

ben wrote poems for beverly again. they were written in the sand sometimes, and sometimes in bill's home. they all still stayed in bill's home. the others all felt too empty.

richie joined them next. eddie wouldn't let go of richie for days once he came. it was like clockwork, they were all reverting to who they were before and stan secretly loved it. he missed the days when he was happy and free with his friends. he missed when he was young. richie was much softer than stan remembered. he was sadder and and so much more alone. he said he and his partner had fallen ill. his partner. stan didn't even know he was a queer.

stan wondered if mike would be there with them soon. they traveled the streets of derry, as if they had never left. stan used to pray to wake up. he began to wish he never would. one day they were swimming in the quarry, with georgie too. all of them were in their underwear and it was colder than they remembered. bill held beverly on his shoulders like they had before, and eddie fought to push her off while on richie's shoulder. ben told stan that he was falling in love with beverly over again. stan had never been happier to see someone fall in love.

stan laughed when beverly crashed into the water, pulling eddie with her. ben cheered, even after stan explained that beverly lost. bill and richie wrestled and stan picked up georgie, carrying him on his back as they all laughed and smiled. they all went silent, all of a sudden. it was like something sucked all of the excitement and light and sound out of their little world. beverly, ben, bill, richie, eddie, stan and even georgie stood up and stared at where they knew the room was.

“do you think that’s...” richie didn’t finish his sentence. he was overshadowed by stan running out of the water, chasing after a childhood dream. followed by stan was all the losers and georgie and they were all laughing and almost-kind of-maybe crying and their little family was complete but that meant they were all dead. the door swung open just as stan approached it.

there he was.

stan hadn’t seen him since their stupid post-college reunion. he hadn’t changed at all, obviously, as no one changes in derry. stan wondered how he grew up, he wondered if he ever really did.

“stan?” was the first thing mike said. “what is this? w-what - is that - is this real?”

and *mike was real*. mike was sunlight creeping into your bedroom at seven am. mike was rivers rushing by and birds chirping and deer rustling. mike was lunchtime field handling, bird watching at eleven am because you woke up early enough but got distracted by the way he looks in the morning. mike morning and afternoon and evening and he was day just like he was night and he was true, and there, and

real.

“yeah,” was all stan could manage. “it’s real.”

Author's Note:

hola friends u made it!!!!!! i hope it was ok leave a comment with ur thoughts pls i love soft things!!!!

my tumblr is <http://lizwillstealyourgirl.tumblr.com>
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pls hit me up at any given times i love friends n i’m rllly nice i promise!!!! <3

also this is unedited really so jus like. tell me what 2 fix n i will